

Letters to the editor

► *The threat from the sea*

It seems that sea levels are to rise in the not too distant future, the loss of arable land will be devastating, with catastrophic consequences to our food chain. It is with this in mind that the historical land reclamation of the Isle of Axholme is considered here.

About a year ago I came across and read the book 'The Manuscript in a Red Box' it is written anonymously but thought by some to have been written by the vicar of Crowle during the reign of Charles II. The story is set around the reclaiming the marshy and boggy land of the Isle of Axholme and that of the Trent valley to the east of the River Trent by the Dutch engineers under the direction of Charles II. This was undertaken with much opposition from the local people at the time. Dutch technology of the day was also responsible for the reclamation of land in North Lincolnshire to the south of the river Humber and much more land in South Lincolnshire and Norfolk and other fen-land areas in the east of England.

This was an enormously difficult undertaking, only horse drawn transport, barge and flat-bottom boats could be used to build the dykes, and the many drainage channels and canals in areas where by the very nature of the wet land, roads and pathways where at the very minimum.

Charles II foresaw the taxes he would gain for his government from the farming of these reclaimed areas, as king he was in control of the government of the day and he could take the long-term view, not the short-term views of our present day five-year-term governments. The financial losses our nation will suffer if nothing is done to raise the height of our present river and sea defences, can only be imagined, the loss of these food growing areas would be devastating and food will not be the only problem, living space will be at a premium. People, will lose their homes and their livelihoods from the industries in these areas, and it will concentrate the population into the higher ground. All the problems that will bring are quite frightening to contemplate.

Today we have the advantage of hard metalled roads giving access to these

dykes, also the heavy mechanical plant and transport to carry out the necessary work. It will be a gigantic task, but it will be as nothing to that which faced the original builders four centuries ago with their limited transport and technology. This surely is an issue which is above party politics.

I opened this with the words, 'It seems that the sea levels are to rise in the not too distant future'. There are many people who believe it to be an absolute certainty that they will rise. We should now be making plans to implement the consolidation of these defences against the rising water levels. Can we really afford not too?

Michael Smart, Scunthorpe

► *Cultural desert?*

We have lived in the area for ten years having moved from Buxton in Derbyshire.

We love living here but we feel we are in a cultural desert. If we want to see modern ballet or a well-known production of a play or a group, Beautiful South for example, we are stumped. We go to Norwich or Nottingham but travelling to these destinations is becoming expensive and time-consuming.

Are we the only people who feel neglected? Can we not start a campaign to bring more modern, well-known actors, dancers and groups to Lincolnshire – not just Grimsby but to Boston and Lincoln? We need it desperately.

What do other readers feel about this?

Joan Wilson, Spilsby

Our "Out and about" feature on page 41 of this magazine includes information on Art Council grants and how the money is being used to improve the county's cultural life.

Editor

► *Dormouse devotee*

I joined the Mammal Society because of my interest in dormice conservation. Indeed, for several years running I attended specialist nest-box checks, even qualifying for a dormouse certificate on one occasion.

However, I've always had to travel miles to see dormice – to Canterbury, the Isle of Wight, Cheddar Gorge and Bramley Frith, the other side of Read-

ing. So imagine my delight when I read in the April edition of 'Lincolnshire Life' of dormice being successfully reintroduced to our own county.

I hope the conservation agencies responsible will let people like me pay a visit to their sites at some stage in the near future. I'd love to take a friend along whose only previous attempt to see dormice fell foul of both the petrol protests and the Hatfield rail crash.

Tim Mickleburgh, Grimsby.

► *The cycling salesman*

I am writing in response to the letter which appeared in the March edition of 'Lincolnshire Life'.

Mr Geoffrey Nowers, who worked for the Witham Oil and Grease Company, often cycled to my father's farm at Amber Hill near Boston.

In 1942 my father moved to a farm a mile from Belton, Grantham, and Mr Nowers still cycled there, selling his goods and working for the same company.

He was always smartly dressed but his eyesight was very bad. I am eighty-one and many people I know still remember him very well. He lived in the Horbling-Sleaford area so he must have cycled more than forty-five miles every day.

Audrey East, Amber Hill, Boston

► *Auster quest*

I am currently researching two silver Auster aircraft which ran short excursion flights from Clethorpes and possibly Brighton beaches during the mid 1950s. I would be very grateful if any readers with any information, photographs, details of colour schemes, etc, would be kind enough to get in touch with me.

John Hewitt, The Cottage,
Main Street, Whitton, Scunthorpe,
North Lincolnshire, DN15 9LJ

If you would like to contribute to this page please address your letters to: The Editor, Lincolnshire Life, PO Box 81, Lincoln, LN1 1HD or email us on editorial@lincolnshirelife.co.uk For more information about 'Lincolnshire Life' visit our website on www.lincolnshirelife.co.uk